

FSA Continues to Deliver High Customer Satisfaction Scores

Outcomes and Significance

In fiscal years 2013 and 2014, FSA registered an ACSI (American Customer Satisfaction Index) score of 78.4 and since 2011, has either met or exceeded its target score for this performance metric. The scores over the past two fiscal years clearly place FSA as an industry leader in customer satisfaction. In fact, FSA has significantly outscored the Federal Government—which averaged a 66 in calendar year 2013 and a 64 in 2014—and has matched or exceeded private sector banking counterparts (i.e. Wells Fargo, Bank of America), which posted 2013 and 2014 aggregate scores of 78 and 76 respectively.

FSA uses ACSI methodology to rate the enterprise's customer service across its major programs on a 1-100 scale. Survey scores from different stages of the lifecycle are weighted proportionately and averaged to create a single score.

FSA's Approach and Methodology

To guide FSA towards achieving its vision "To be the most trusted and reliable source of student financial aid, information and services in the nation," FSA annually reviews and frequently updates its *Five-Year Strategic Plan* to document the strategic goals, objectives, and performance metrics of the organization. To gauge its success in meeting its strategic goals, in FY14, FSA identified 13 performance metrics. One of the key performance metrics to gauge progress against FSA's Strategic Goal A: *Provide superior service and information to students and borrowers*, is the enterprise's annual American Customer Satisfaction Index score.

In an effort to measure customer satisfaction among FSA's 21 million FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) filers and its 41 million outstanding borrowers, since FY11, the enterprise has annually deployed ACSI surveys to aid applicants, students in school, and borrowers in repayment. The surveys aim to measure how significantly FSA is improving in terms of streamlined processes for customer interaction and the accessibility of information FSA provides its customers. The ACSI is the only national cross-industry measure of customer satisfaction in the United States. The survey data serve as inputs to an econometric model that benchmarks customer satisfaction with more than 300 companies in 43 industries and 10 economic sectors, as well as various services of federal and local government agencies.

The Applicant's Experience

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (known as FAFSA) is the form that can be prepared annually by current and prospective college students in the U.S. to determine their eligibility for Title IV funds.

FAFSA.gov is the hosting site for the digital version of the FAFSA and serves as the gateway for over 99% of the 21 million FAFSAs processed annually. The site receives upward to 100 million visits each year.

FAFSA on the Web, rivaling the best web portals in government and industry, scored 88 out of 100 for customer satisfaction throughout FY13 and FY14 on the American Customer Satisfaction Index. This placed Federal Student Aid among the very best of the more than 100 government websites and on par with the best in the private sector.

FAFSA simplification has been cited as producing millions in monetary savings and eliminating millions of hours in annual paperwork burden on the public according to the [2012 ICB Report to Congress](#). In a recent [feature](#) released by Government Executive Magazine profiling the downward trend of customer satisfaction with government services, the Department's FAFSA web site was highlighted as a "beacon of light."

In September 2014, the Partnership for Public Service and Accenture Federal Services released *Serving Citizens: Strategies for Customer-Centered Government in the Digital Age*. The report featured an array of leading edge customer-centered initiatives across the Federal sector with recommendations for expansion and replication across agencies. Page 27 of the report spotlighted FAFSA simplification and FSA's interagency data exchanges/transfer initiatives with states and the IRS. To review the report, click [here](#).